



**Rescuing the world's greatest places
(Safeguarding World Heritage sites in
Danger)**

Name and unit of project officer	Dr. Mechtild Rössler D/DIR/WHC/P
Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies):	Global
Duration (in months):	24 (2014-2015)
Partner(s) institutions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other UNESCO Sectors • UNESCO Field Offices • Advisory Bodies to the World heritage Committee (ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN) • Relevant NGOs
Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs	USD 3.000.000

Rationale and background

The 1972 UNESCO *World Heritage Convention* is a central tool in helping identify and protect the remarkable natural and cultural heritage of the world for the benefit of current and future generations. It is designed to encourage international cooperation for the conservation of protected areas and to monitor their state of conservation.

It is on this basis that one of the prominent features established by the 1972 *World Heritage Convention*, the List of World Heritage in Danger, was designed to inform the international community of conditions which threaten the very characteristics for which a property was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and to encourage global support and corrective action. Inscription of a site on the List of World Heritage in Danger requires the World Heritage Committee to develop and adopt, in consultation with the State Party concerned, a programme for corrective measures, a timeframe for their implementation, and subsequently to closely monitor the situation of the site and to assist in its recovery. All efforts must be made to restore the site's values in order to enable its removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger as soon as possible. Since 1978, 70 properties, located in 50 different countries, have been inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

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As of June 2013, 44 properties have been included on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The distribution of these properties inscribed on the List illustrates a number of issues: the distribution of sites is not equal across the types of properties and the regions of the world: 18 are natural properties (41%) whereas 26 are cultural properties (59%). They are located in 31 States Parties as follows:

- Africa 16 properties (36%)
- Arab States 12 properties (27%)
- Latin America 7 properties (16%)
- Europe/North America 5 properties (11%)
- Asia-Pacific 4 properties (9%)

Why UNESCO?

UNESCO has the mission to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. The World Heritage Centre, established in 1992, oversees the day-to-day management of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. As the focal point within UNESCO for all matters related to World Heritage, the Centre keeps the public informed of World Heritage issues.

As a specialized agency in the UN system, UNESCO is also uniquely placed to work both at intergovernmental level with State Party authorities and site managers, but also a wide range of other stakeholders including local communities and global, regional and local NGOs.

Furthermore, UNESCO is continuously committed to assist States Parties in conflict and post-conflict areas to preserve their World Heritage properties, such as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo for example, or more recently in Syria with the creation of a special fund for the conservation of heritage, in Mali following destructions at the World Heritage sites of Timbuktu and Tomb of Askia. UNESCO is also providing support for the conservation of natural properties under threat due to mining activities or poaching, such as for the Rainforests of Atsinanana in Madagascar, Mount Nimba in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, as well as Simien National Park in Ethiopia, amongst others.

Overall Goal/Objective

There are many ways in which the *World Heritage Convention* can be leveraged by both UNESCO and other conservation stakeholders to promote conservation of World Heritage sites in Danger and integrate them within a larger development context. This proposal for Danger sites takes into consideration the crucial advantage offered by the *World Heritage Convention* as a legal instrument as well as the long-term experiences based at UNESCO in addressing threats to World Heritage properties. The key advantage is that the proposal is closely linked to statutory processes under the 1972 *Convention* which involves follow-up, monitoring and reporting.

During the past 40 years, UNESCO has undertaken a variety of activities to address threats to World Heritage sites in Danger. Immediate assistance from the World Heritage Fund is not sufficient to save these endangered sites. UNESCO needs to join forces with the international community and the private sector to be able to respond efficiently.

Main expected results

Expected Result 1

Sites have benefitted from increased technical assistance

Expected Result 2

Targeted beneficiaries are better informed about the economic opportunities related to the preservation of World Heritage sites and Conditions are created for increased economic opportunities related to preservation of the sites

Expected Result 3

International community is better informed of the conditions that threaten the very characteristics for which a property was inscribed on the World Heritage List leading to corrective actions being considered and supported by the States Parties

Activities and outputs/deliverables relating to the achievement of expected results

The activities will focus on three major aspects:

Supporting

The activities will give priority to setting up conservation programmes that address the imminent threats to these sites and mitigate their impacts, in order to prevent the loss of the sites' World Heritage values. The ultimate goal is to remove the site from the List of World Heritage in Danger. Donors can contribute to implementing specific corrective measures and costed operations, as all mechanisms for monitoring and reporting are fully in place under the *World Heritage Convention*.

Mobilizing

Communication material will be developed focusing on the benefits of the *World Heritage Convention* and to inform broad audiences on how the Danger listed sites can be saved. Informed communities will lead to increased support for the preservation of these important sites.

Sustaining

Priority will be given to activities which enhance the commitment by stakeholders, sustain their involvement in the long-term and ensure governance and effective management of the properties. Civil society and private sector participation is encouraged in attracting support to World Heritage sites on the Danger List as a means of securing broader and longer-term support for their survival. Particular emphasis will be placed on ensuring that all actors are made fully aware of the conservation leveraging potential of the *World Heritage Convention*, with the intention of mainstreaming this simple tool in a wider array of actions involving conservation and sustainable development in and around World Heritage sites.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

Local communities, personnel working in national authorities responsible for the protection of sites, visitors, academics will benefit from the project.

Activities will all be implemented in collaboration with the World Heritage Advisory Bodies (the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property ICCROM, the International Council on Monuments and Sites ICOMOS, the

International Union for Conservation of Nature IUCN). Civil society and private sector participation is also encouraged

Implementation strategy

National level experienced NGOs will be selected to implement the project with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and UNESCO Field Offices. Those organizations that have experience working with UNESCO will get prime opportunity. UNESCO will be responsible for providing technical guidance, overall supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the project. The project staff will be provided training by organizing various workshops and training sessions to implement the project smoothly and effectively. Relevant Field Offices will be consulted to design the precise activities once the sites / countries are identified.

Sustainability and exit strategy

Best practices and successful examples of recoveries will be widely shared to assist in mitigating similar threats at sites globally. Links to local economy, job creation and poverty alleviation will also be established to ensure the long-term sustainable preservation of the heritage concerned.

UNESCO will closely supervise and monitor the project through regular reporting, field visits and review meetings on different components and activities.